

THE NOMINAL SNAKE GENERA *MASTIGODRYAS* AMARAL, 1934, AND *DRYADOPHIS* STUART, 1939

Hobart M. Smith¹ and Kenneth R. Larsen¹

ABSTRACT.— Some recent workers who have combined the genera *Mastigodryas* Amaral, 1934, and *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939, under the former name, have done so prematurely in view of characters by Amaral that differentiate them. Either the genera should be maintained distinct, or the younger, but widely-known name, *Dryadophis*, should be retained through exercise of the plenary powers of the ICZN, already requested.

Prompted by Romer's (1956: 577) indication of the synonymy of *Mastigodryas* Amaral, 1934, and *Dryadophis* Stuart, 1939, a proposal was made (Smith, 1963) that *Mastigodryas* be suppressed under the plenary powers of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in order to preserve the more familiar *Dryadophis*. The ICZN never acted upon the proposal, however, because Amaral (1964) pointed out that the monotypic *Mastigodryas* should not be regarded as a synonym of *Dryadophis*, since it has no apical scale pits and 70 subcaudals, whereas in *Dryadophis* the subcaudals number 79 or more, and paired apical scale pits are present in all species.

Nevertheless Peters and Orejas-Miranda (1970:190) lumped the two genera, citing all valid Central and South American species-group taxa of *Dryadophis* under the generic name *Mastigodryas*. No mention was made of the comments by Smith and Amaral that appeared in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*; but Romer's observation was noted and the comment added that Peters had seen the type of *M. danieli*, that he concluded it is congeneric with *Dryadophis*, and that priority should be observed.

We have not seen any specimens of *M. danieli*, but on the basis of Amaral's (1964) comments maintain that to regard it as congeneric with *Dryadophis* is premature. *Dryadophis* merits perpetuation until more conclusive evidence of synonymy with *Mastigodryas* is available. If such a conclusion is confirmed, reconsideration should be given to suppression of the nominal genus *Mastigodryas* in order to preserve the widely known name *Dryadophis*, resubmitting for ICZN action the proposal first presented in 1963.

LITERATURE CITED

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¹Department of Environmental, Population, and Organismic Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder 80302.